1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

Darien

THE NEGROES OF THE DARIEN SECTION, MANY OF whom live in small scattered communities outside the town, are proud of their Darien ancestry. When the younger people migrate to larger communities, it is a common thing to hear them say proudly, "My people come frum Darien."

One of the most typical settlements is opposite the Todd Grant Negro School. A few houses are clustered about the knoll facing the school building, and more dilapidated board shacks are scattered over the little hill. At the top is Aunty Jane Lewis' cabin, surrounded by small sheds and fenced patches of ground where chickens and a goat are kept from wandering too far. At the north a few cypress trees straggle off to the wood. A sturdy bush provides the sunny drying ground for the gourds that later will be used as water dippers.

Aunty Jane * claims that she is one hundred and fifteen years old, and to see the small bent woman with the deeply lined black skin and filmy eyes is to believe her claim. Her voice is high pitched, with the thin timbre of extreme age, but she still moves with sudden agile gestures. During our conversation she hopped up from the steps and began to do the Buzzard Lope [17] to illustrate her story.

"I belong tuh Robert Toodle wut lib in Nawt Calina an he sole me down yuh wen Ise twenty-one. I ain membuh much bout Nawt Calina but uh membuhs plenty bout duh ole days yuh, cuz I bin yuh neah bout a hunnud yeahs. I be-

* *Jane Lewis, Darien.*

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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> Jesus make de blind see,
> Jesus make de cripple walk,
> Jesus make de deaf to hear.
> Walk in, kind Jesus!
> No man can hinder me.[18]

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When Laura Towne heard this impressive spiritual, she believed the refrain "no man can hinder me" meant that "nothing could prevent access to Jesus." Yet Charles Nordhoff, a journalist sent to Port Royal in 1863 to write about Sea Islanders, heard the song and immediately attributed it to "an aspiration for liberty."[19] Certainly there were elements of truth in both interpretations—a combination of mystical belief in the miraculous powers of the Christian God and a deep sense of freedom—a heritage from the African past. Higginson heard Gullah soldiers sing the song and noted that they sometimes substituted "hinder me" with "hinder we." But he failed to attach any significance to this, merely stating that it was "more spicy to the ear, and more in keeping with the usual head-over-heels arrangement of their pronouns." Despite the perception and usefulness of Higginson's book, it also contains a disturbing air of condescension toward the Gullahs which was typical of some abolitionists. Although he attested to the Gullahs' daring and coolness in combat, thus affirming their equality with whites in terms of courage, he failed to credit them with having any intellectual complexity in their modes of expression. He recognized Gullah soldiers' physical strength but overlooked aspects of their character which bespoke of higher emotions, unless these could be interpreted in a strictly Christian sense. Hence Higginson viewed the Gullahs' songs as "thoroughly religious," and the attitudes contained in them as "always the same, and, as a commentary on the life of the race, . . . infinitely pathetic. Nothing but patience for this life,—nothing but triumph in the next."[20]

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Gullahs were a proud people who did not indulge in self-pity and would have resented being seen in a piteous light by their friend and supporter. Life for the Gullahs was an uphill battle but not without grace and nobility. Higginson sometimes failed to grasp this, despite his close relationship with Gullah soldiers and their families. One can imagine the thoughts of Gullah soldiers as they sang and contemplated that their treasured expectation was becoming a reality. Substitution of "we" for "me," possibly represented feelings of nationalism which had developed over a period of generations when social and cultural traditions

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3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

merged under slavery and created one people with common interests, ambitions, beliefs, and sense of oppression.

The Gullahs' Marseillaise was the exhilarating spiritual "New Jerusalem":

De Talles' tree in Paradise
De Christian calls de Tree ob Life,
an' I hope dat trumpet blow me home
To my new Jerusalem!

Blow Gabriel! Trumpet, blow louder, louder!
An' I hope dat trumpet blow me home
To my New Jerusalem!

Paul and Silas jail-bound
Sing God's praise both night and day,
An' I hope dat trumpet blow me home
To my New Jerusalem![21]

This favorite "shout" song of the Gullahs was triumphant rather than tragic. Thus it was not one of those to be sung with a "heavy heart" or a "troubled speerit." "New Jerusalem" was an uplifting, infectious tune. Its symbolic range could harmonize with a number of situations, circumstances, and experiences. When freedman Maurice, who had been blinded by his master in a fit of rage, sang "New Jerusalem" at the Praise House, his mind turned toward heaven and the prospect of gaining his sight in a future world. But when the freedpeople sang "New Jerusalem" at the Emancipation Jubilee on New Year's Day in 1866, it was their earthly future and enthusiasm for their long-awaited freedom that filled their thoughts and expectations. The tree of life was the tree of liberty, as paradise was a land free of bondage. The meaning behind this spiritual was not lost on Northern teacher Elizabeth Botume:

> The streets of the city were filled with happy freed people. According to their spiritual, they had "fought for liberty," and this was their "New Jerusalem,"of which they so often sang. Even the poorest, and those most scantily clothed, looked as if they already "walked that golden street," and felt "that starry crown" upon their uncovered heads. It was indeed a day of great rejoicing, and one long to be remembered. These people were living their "New Jerusalem."[22]

Spirituals sung during the Civil War attest to Gullah creativity and further demonstrate that the desire for freedom was as strong a motivation as relgious piety. Songs such as the following grew out of the war years:

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Idell Smalls

I WANT THE YOUTH TO BE PROUD OF WHO WE ARE AND WHERE WE'RE FROM

I was born on Yonges Island. My mother was a farm worker, my father an oyster picker. I attended elementary and high school here on the island, but my family could not afford to send me to college. Instead I worked on the farm and restaurants to help my mother raise six children. I married and lived for a time in Washington, D.C. I returned to the island for a visit and decided it was time to move home.

In 1985 I had the opportunity to go to Nairobi, Kenya. I had an experience that is hard to put into words. Being there, I could feel, smell, and relive my childhood through tradition, dialect, customs, and being able to look at my people there in Nairobi and see my family in South Carolina in their faces. On returning home I wanted to instill in the youth and adults the importance of holding onto our heritage and African customs, because not many of us will ever get to Africa to experience what I did. I wanted the youth to be proud of who we are and where we're from.

The trip helped me address some of the problems our teens were having, such as being teased about the Gullah dialect, which is a mixture of African and American speech. We began to develop a play called "In Celebration of Us." Each teen adopted a senior at the senior center and began interviewing her about her life. The teens wrote and produced the play.

We're focusing on changing images and instilling self-respect in the young adults of the sea islands through economic and cultural survival development.

41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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Ms. Elaine Jenkins

I GET MY STRENGTH FROM THE OLDER PEOPLE ON THESE ISLANDS

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I don't know how other young people feel, but I get my strength from the older people on these islands. My mother is one of them. I like to talk to my mother and her friends. When we get together, we always go back to the old days. And those days were hard days.

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The songs at Wesley, I mean the songs that the older people raise from the floor, those things do something for me. The music is a vital part of that service. There's almost a song for every feeling and mood. I can only talk about Wesley, but I don't think there's any danger of the older songs dying out there. Those songs are being passed down from the old people. Like Mrs. Hunter—Mrs. Hunter's children and her grandchildren. And then I hear them, and I'm sure other people hear them, and you write down the words.

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My brother Bill has been doing a lot of videotaping and the folk don't mind. We hope to just hold onto those things and put them aside for safe-keeping for the others who'll be coming along. Talking to the older people about the old days when there was really no connection to the city, they had to be self-sufficient. I don't think any of those things will ever be lost.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Janie Hunter

WHAT I KNOW I TRY TO TEACH MY CHILDREN

When I come up, my parents sat us down on Sunday afternoon after church and taught us stories, and their life stories—how they came up. Some of my great-grandparents came up in slavery times, and all these stories and folktales that I tell are from way back in the history of slavery times.

And what I know I try to teach my children—my seven daughters and six sons, and ninety-five grandchildren, and twenty-four great-grands, so as the generations go on, it won't die out. I think the past is very important for them to understand. We don't know what the future will bring. So maybe the future will bring back the past. There's a lot of people on this island, older than I am, they know all about the past, but they feel so embarrassed to explain about it. They figure people are going to look down on them as nothing. But I always say, "I am just what I am." And what I want my children to know that when I'm gone, my children can teach their children.

So I have over thirty head of children come to my home on Sunday afternoons and I teach them different things that it's important for them to know. They rather hear stories and folktales. I think if all the mothers would teach what they know, they would keep their children out of trouble. They would have something to build upon. They'd have something to look forward to. But to just turn them loose and not let them know what to expect, that's why children be in so much shock when things happen to them. It's our parents' task to teach our children.

The songs tell stories too—the religious songs and the blues songs. Those songs gave us a feeling to go on. That's all we had to live by. We sang and the games we played. We didn't go to piccolo or none of that—there wasn't any of that in those times. We take a tub and washboard and make our own music. On Sunday evening my father's house was full up. We sing and shout and feel good about it. We had a good time. We didn't be sick. We didn't get in no trouble. Everybody loved one another. And we still love to sing. That is our talent God bless us with. We love to sing and we love people. We love to get along with everybody. We was brought up like that.

4: Caravan & Caravan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mr. Benjamin Bligen

I FIND NO FAULT LIVING HERE ON THE ISLAND

823 Johns Island is my home. I was born and raised here and it's peaceful. I've traveled across different parts of the world and I love different places, but I love Johns Island the best. There's peace and quiet here and nice places to go if you feel like travel. You can go in the river. You can go swimming if you want to. You can go fishing if you want to. You can go crabbing if you want to do that. You can go and sing and shout if you want to; no one to stop you. I find no fault living here on the island. I love it here. I make up my mind to be here until the Lord make a change in my life, to take me on home.

533 The singing brings joy to your soul. Regardless of how much you feel down and you feel like you can't move, you start singing one of those songs and it brings joy to your soul and lifts you up. You start thinking about the good things, and we realize we've got somebody on our side. We're trying to pass it on to the younger folks so they can carry the old traditions on. Our old folks taught us these songs and they would like for we to carry it on through and they would like for we to pass it on to the young generation so they can keep it up. And I hope that many and many that come to our different churches will hear these songs and sing these songs and will be able to carry it on when the older ones have passed on out of this world.

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771 869 It's a different time now than when I was growing up. It's harder now to get the young people to come on the old side. My family had a strong religion. I try to keep on the road that they was traveling on and do the things they want me to do. Hopefully, I will be able to teach the young people the way that my old folks taught me, that they will have something that will stand by them when trouble rise. Whatever comes up against them in life they will have something to hold onto, something that will deliver them in the time of their need.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Janie Hunter

WE HAVE TO KEEP IT ALIVE

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I want to see my children go on, as long as people want to hear them and they've got the voice. It means a lot to me and it means a lot to them. If they stop, it's going down. We have to keep it alive.

You've got to talk and give people an understanding about what you're talking about—the background and where it came from. That's very important. The young people don't know many of the things that happened. It takes somebody who came out of this experience to teach them and tell them the meaning of it and what it can do for them. I have the experience 'cause that's all I was doing my whole life. My parents and grandparents talked all about how they came up, and I took it in.

skilled in bad weather. The best of the inhabitable land has been owned by two or three black families since the last half of the nineteenth century. Most of the present inhabitants are related to each other, at least distantly. A few white sportsmen have established hunting lodges on the uninhabited portions of the island, and a land development company has been draining some marshes in order to build waterfront resort homes. At the time of the present study, however, all people present on a daily basis on the island were members of the black community. The island is well-known to residents of Georgetown County, even though few have visited it. It is generally considered to be a mysterious and somewhat backward place. High school students tell of being teased about coming from the island and being looked upon as somehow different and perhaps unsophisticated. Teachers in mainland schools note the close friendships between island children and the in-group humor characteristic of them; some teachers consider their language distinctive, but others do not.

Historically, the economy of the island was based upon rice. Once at least nine major plantations flourished there, worked and probably managed largely by black labor. Few of the white owners made permanent homes on the island, probably no more than two families at any one time. The majority of the land remains in the hands of white individual owners or corporations which own it as absentee owners. Long [illegible] ceased [illegible]

464 562 197 463 community as well as domestic servant for the post office--a unique job combination which she handled with skill and grace. Increasingly, the job patterns of island women are associated with greater use of standard English than those of either island men or mainland women in the lower socio-economic group.

829 •186 562 [121] A second factor which may influence both choice of language variety and choice of occupation is that of identification with island life. A more detailed attitudinal study is needed to describe the dimensions of this factor, but casual observation and conversation with young people gave some indication of its importance. In general, young males seemed to identify more strongly with island life than young females. Fifth-grade boys expressed some regret that a ferry would soon connect the island with the mainland, saying that the island wouldn't be the island anymore. All girls and women who expressed an opinion about it universally welcomed the easier access to the mainland that a ferry would bring. In one large family which had eleven children ranging from eight years to about twenty-four, the mother and father had a long-standing argument about the value of island life. The mother preferred the convenience of mainland living, while the father maintained that they could "have more" on the island, in terms of land and material goods, than they could have anywhere else. A son in his twenties maintained that he would want to raise his children

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Georgetown

829 there so that he could teach them the things he had learned,
• 186 and expressed his belief that older siblings who had moved
562 away would return in later years. A daughter in her late teens praised the island as a place to grow up, but said she would not ask her future husband to live there. Another brother spent long hours in the company of an aged step-grandfather, listening to his stories about the old days on the island. One young mother in another family spoke with feeling of her loneliness during the days she spent on the island with three pre-school children, when most other adults were away at jobs on the mainland. In general, the men on the island seemed to share in more communal activities than did the women. To the outside observer, island life seemed more difficult for women than for men. There was some indication that identification with island life increased with age, for both sexes. One older woman had lived for much of her married life near the metropolitan center of Charleston, returning to the island in later life. Another older man and his wife had spent some years living and working in New York City, returning to the island when his aged parents needed them. They were both leaders in community and church life on the island; their speech reflected their
(197) wide range of experience. In formal church speech events, both spoke and read language very close to standard; in their conversations with each other at home many creole features were used. At the close of the field work for the

829 present study, a foster son of this couple returned from New
186 York after the father's death to live with his mother on the
562 island. Despite the difficult living conditions, the island remains a valued place to come home to for both middle aged and older adults. Those with the greatest degree of identification with island life seemed to be young men and older adults of both sexes.

5.2 Age of Speaker and Language Use

121 Age groups were selected on the basis of natural
561 groupings which existed in the island community itself.
484 Young people from the age of junior high school up to the early twenties formed a natural group which commuted daily to the mainland, and organized parties and dances on the island. Middle aged adults from about 30 to 50 had growing families of their own and commuted to mainland jobs daily. Older adults over 65 had either slowed down or quit entirely their mainland jobs and spent much of their time daily on the island itself; they, with a small group of pre-school children, constituted the day-time population of the island.
121 After it became apparent that a portion of the mainland popu-
561 lation differed in important respects from the island com-
184 munity, older adults from the lower socio-economic mainland group were included in the study. Language used by these age
121 groups is compared in Table 6 above (see page 120). The
561 table also reflects the relationship between the social
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9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

their manners are in their own keeping. The men may have, for instance, as many wives as they please, so long as they do not quarrel about such matters." And, I notice, Southerners on our coast still tacitly observe this tradition.

When I began the work of actively retrieving slave songs, and instituted "sings" at the Cabin in front of my cottage, I found it expedient to follow the same procedure. The group—silently, be it remembered—made it clear that such matters as jail sentences and surplus wives were their affair, whereas my concern was limited to their music, although anything—such as drinking, "soldiering," or insubordination—which interfered with its proper presentation was distinctly within my province.

As a concrete example of the lengths to which the Negro carries his reluctance to give information, I can do no better than tell how Julia taught me a valuable lesson: never take anything for granted. After being my laundress for three winters, she became my cook in 1915, and for the fifteen years in all she enjoyed a precious secret. With her as intermediary I was able to hear the slave songs. She never sang a note on my place, and I assumed that she could not. But in 1927, at Mrs. Arnold's funeral, her dramatic moment arrived. With the group she had brought to my door, she stood beside the open grave, and she sang as well as the others. When I periodically ask why, in all those years, she never told me she could sing, she smiles quizzically, but says nothing. Perhaps she does not know herself.

However, it is just possible that an age-old compensation complex explains the situation. I am convinced that the average Negro enjoys intensely knowing something that the white man does not, and the exquisite delight he derives from realizing that the white man has been bested in a little game makes up for any loss or indignity he may be obliged to endure. Julia's game was innocent and her loss was financial, but that such tactics may have a less pleasant side—aimed at the eventual discomfiture of an exacting employer—it may be well to remember.

Before leaving the subject of the Negro's secretiveness, it may be well to consider this racial characteristic in relation to another that is quite as often mentioned by travelers in Africa: dread of derision.[6] It seems to me that the attitude of the whites toward the blacks has never been calculated to encourage the latter to parade their Africanisms. The slave trader's need of justification, and our ignorance of Africa and its culture, enabled him to persuade us that Africans were barbarians in

[6] Fear of ridicule enables African blackmailers with a gift of clever improvisation to collect tribute from their thin-skinned brothers—for the songs they do not sing.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

nced of our "civilizing" influence.[7] The success of his propaganda is reflected in the words of Fanny Kemble, who wrote in her *Journal* that "all tongues—the most vulgar, as well as the self-styled most refined—have learned to turn the very name of their race into an insult and a reproach." Evidence of its pernicious effect on the Negroes themselves is also given by Sir Charles Lyell in his *Second Visit to the United States* (1845–1846). He asserts: "It is a good sign of the progress made in civilization by the native-born colored race that they speak of the Africanians with much of the contempt with which Europeans talk of Negroes." To the truth of these statements I can testify. I was cautioned as a child never to use the term African in the presence of our colored people for fear of hurting their feelings. Need we be surprised that the Negro denied all knowledge of Africa—even as Peter denied all knowledge of Christ!

Colored people are not the simple-minded, insensitive individuals (Illustration 9) that certain Southerners lead us to imagine when they jauntily say: "Negroes are like children and must be treated accordingly." As in every race, there are immature minds, but in my experience they size us up far better than we do them. I am inclined to agree with an observant Georgian who told me: "They know us better than we know ourselves." In consequence it seems to me advisable to make no definite assertions about the race, yet we do need every hint which will enable us to avoid such pitfalls as trap those unsuspecting souls who believe what they are told. Since Fanny Kemble's time we have seen in print all too many instances of the way the psychic Negroes obligingly tell unsuspecting listeners exactly what they wish to hear. Also, like their African cousins, our colored people are born actors; and an outsider with a pet theory about them can find ready confirmation of almost any notion.[8] The inquisitive college professor is particularly vulnerable, and when he becomes authoritative he is giving the Negro the opportunity he relishes above all things to laugh up his sleeve at the white man's gullibility.

Not all Negroes are like this. Some are loyalty itself; others hold themselves

[7] As late as 1902, Joseph A. Tillinghast, in The Negro in Africa and America, speaks of the "benighted savagery" of the African Negro and stresses the vast superiority of European culture. In the light of what is happening in Europe today, it seems to me wiser to say little about the blackness of the pot.

[8] From Fanny Kemble's account of her contact with her husband's slaves, it is ironically evident that they were the better actors. Their performance was so perfect that it carried conviction, and added to the difficulties encountered by Pierce Butler in his attempt to make a living out of his plantations.

A, [For Illustration 9, see Category 142, plate facing p. 84--Analyst]